

March 24, 2005

Phil Brown, Chief of Staff to  
The Honorable Brian Palmer  
885 House Office Building  
Lansing, MI 48909

RE: House Bill 4460 – School Lockdown Drills

Dear Representative Palmer:

Recently Representative Van Regenmorter introduced HB 4460, a bill requiring schools to have at least two "lockdown" drills each year. Specifically the bill will require such a drill be conducted to require the confinement of the students, securing of the premises, or other security measures as appropriate to an emergency such as the release of a hazardous material or the presence of an armed individual on or near the premises.

The bill has been assigned to the House Education Committee.

We contacted several middle level and high school principals to learn of current practice and the impact such a requirement would have. We found a strong negative reaction to requiring students to practice lockdowns. The principal of Chelsea High School best reflects the insight we gained: "We have an obligation to have kids feel that school is safe. I really believe lockdown drills do more to create fear than they do to create safety. We can train the adults and the kids will follow their lead if we have a real emergency. If they want us to have to do two "adult practices" per year, I can live with that."

The principal and Chief of Police in New Boston, Michigan are very opposed saying, "It will teach the potential shooters where the kids will be." This school outlined to us their very extensive procedures they have in place. They drill these with the faculty.

The Michigan Association of Secondary Principals want for our students the same as the bill sponsor, schools to be a safe place. Unfortunately, HB 4460, as written, makes schools more unsafe than safe and we must oppose this bill.

Respectfully,

Jim Ballard  
Executive Director